

# HOW MUCH IS IT WORTH?

*by Fr. Tim Church*

One of the wonderful joys of our new building is the statues of the saints that have come to grace the place where we worship God. I have never seen a line in a church to light a candle before. There is a sense that this is indeed a holy place, a place of prayer. We have been guided by God to accomplish this wonderful task. We praise and thank him for the opportunity to be involved in something so timeless and wonderful.

One of the concerns that we have in our contemporary church is to build and preserve our parish community. It is in our relationships with one another that our children are raised with the moral and spiritual values of the Catholic Church. It is in our relationships with one another that we find opportunities to serve those in need, where we see the face of Christ among us. . It is in our relationships with one another that we experience the loving support and friendship that moves us along, step by step, into God's Kingdom.

All of this happens in a place, fueled by the grace we receive in the Mass and other Sacraments that flow from the altar in the center of our church! No one is alone here. We gather around at altar and beneath a cross, in the midst of the saints and the angels. For our parish community, there is nothing more valuable in all the world than this church. God has given us the strength to join hands and hearts and pocketbooks to make this happen.

It might be important to review how this building was accomplished. We began in earnest over six years ago when we diligently began paying off our existing debt. This amounted to about \$350,000 and took about eight months to pay off. A small group gathered to burn the mortgage on the existing buildings, but no one really knew for sure what lay ahead.

Our capital campaign began three years ago, and we raised \$2,200,000 in pledges. Even before that, we were saving funds from our operating income. Construction began in July of 2004. At its completion, the building cost \$8,800,000, and the parish contributed \$4,800,000 in cash to the project. We will convert our construction loan to permanent financing within the next few months, and payments on principal and interest will begin. Our mortgage payments will be \$35,000 per month.

The impact of the new building on our finances is significant. Our income has not grown at the pace we expected during the last year, and, while we are not necessarily facing a crisis, we need to see a continuation in the building fund contributions in order to remain solvent. This will insure that we have funds to both operate our parish programs and pay our mortgage. One of the advantages to contributing to our building fund is that the diocese affords us a discount on our financial assessment. **14% of our operating income goes to the diocese. Building Fund contributions are not assessed.**

The future plans of our parish are already beginning to take shape. Our program and mission plans are unfolding, and each Sunday Bulletin indicates steps being taken to continue to grow in our work. Building plans are also visible on the horizon. The columbarium, bell tower and adult education building will be underway just as soon as our finances allow.

In a few weeks a pledge card will be given to you to renew your pledge, or to make a pledge to our Building Fund. Please begin your prayers about your decisions to support our parish.